



(Photo by Dan Mackie)

Michel Brandt - Switzerland.

matically recorded and scored by radar. An electronic scoreboard gave results as they were gathered. And good press coverage had been organized, including national coverage by CBS. The facilities at the University of Wisconsin at Oshkosh were superb, ideal in fact — low cost, convenient, and with good food.

Murphy came into play with his intolerable laws, however, as there were inevitable delays, computer breakdowns, wind shifts, starting problems, et al. Generally, these things are irritable but seldom entirely avoidable. The delays would become the subject of dispute later on, however, when the weather turned sour, threatening to cancel the contest. Naturally, most of the delays occurred during super weather. Wouldn't you know?

As the Compulsory Program got run off, nobody was particularly surprised to see Henry Haigh on top, Leo Loudenslager second, and Chipper Melton, third. Less than two hundred points separated the top five places, though, and everyone was impressed by Manfred Stroessenreuther's handling of the Big Zlin.

In the Women's Division, Betty Stewart, Pattie Johnson, and Paula Moore, all from the U.S.A., took 1-2-3.

The Unknown Program would shake up the results, as usual, and this sequence was particularly a stinker, regularly requiring upward maneuvers with not much left in airspeed. Kermit Weeks took the gold, after hav-

ing placed only 13th in the Compulsory. Leo Loudenslager took second, and Manfred Stroessenreuther the bronze.

Overall scores, however, put Leo on top and Manfred second. A very interesting situation, indeed. Of the Europeans, Michel Brandt and Christian Schweitzer were worth watching as was Louis Peña of France in the CAP 21.

It was after the Freestyle Program had begun that International relations got stretched a little thin, almost in concert with the worsening weather. Less than half the Freestyle had been flown when a big sock fell on Wittman Field, bringing with it gloom, anxiety about whether or not the contest could continue (forecasts said it couldn't), and general comiserating over the state of affairs thus far. Bellyaches began to surface — some legitimate, some a result of competition nerves.

Probably the most frequently heard complaint (besides one's own score!) was the fact that the U.S. team got an extra week in the box just prior to the competition. The second was the fact that air shows had used up precious good weather time. There were plenty more, but these should be the subject of debate amongst official representatives of the countries involved.

Once the Freestyle Program finally did get finished, despite Mother Nature, international relations got worse, not better. Betty Stewart, who had dominated the Women's Division by a wide margin, racking up scores ranking in the top ten of the men, flew her Freestyle sequence the wrong way, even landing opposite the other pilots. An official protest from the American team stated that a clerical error had been made, and that she had, in fact, flown the sequence in the direction intended. In a show of sportsmanship (sportspersonship?), the other competing ladies, led by the French, petitioned the International Jury to allow her flight to be scored. The protest got accepted.

Let it be recorded that the "proverbial" hit the fan, as those for and against hotly debated. It was a difficult situation. While Betty clearly dominated the pack, and deserved a World Title, the rules did get bent. Not all of the judges had scored her flight, the balance being averaged. Should Bauerization be based on a zero flight or a scored flight? Were the Jurors unanimous? We got two stories on that one. You can believe that the debate will rage well through winter.

In the midst of all this hallyballo, the 4-Minute Freestyle got run off on Saturday, the day originally reserved for ceremonies and an air show of the champions. Combined totals had put Leo Loudenslager and Henry Haigh of the U.S. at 1-2 and Manfred Stroessenreuther running a close third after Program III.

We have to be honest and say that some of the 4-Minute routines were so incredibly complex that it was difficult to remember who did what. Vertical rolls were the order of the day, along with plenty of knife-edge and snap-rolling. Kermit Weeks did an astounding 4½ consecutive vertical rolls. Or was it five? Stroessenreuther seemed to do a series of vertical snaps capped off by a one-turn flat spin — vertically upwards! We can only add that the announcer got as lost as everyone else.

In the end, it was a clean sweep for the U.S.A. overall — Leo, Henry and Kermit. Despite all the controversy, no one was ready to dispute the fact that the winners deserved their medals. All flew so well, that it was a pity that the Russians weren't there — to be beaten!



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